

Hispanics in the 2008 Election: Rhode Island

Rhode Island's Hispanic population is the 35th largest in the nation. About 120,000 Hispanics reside in Rhode Island, less than 1% of all Hispanics in the United States. There are 43,000 eligible Hispanic voters in Rhode Island, less than 1% of all U.S. Hispanic eligible voters.¹ This fact sheet provides key demographic information on Latino eligible voters.² It also contains data on other major groups of eligible voters in Rhode Island, with comparative data for the U.S. All data are from the Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey.³

Hispanics in Rhode Island's Eligible Voter Population

- Rhode Island's population is 11% Hispanic, ranking as the 12th highest Hispanic population share nationally. New Mexico ranks first with 45%.
- Nearly 6% of eligible voters in Rhode Island are Latinos, the 13th largest Hispanic eligible voter population share nationally. New Mexico ranks first at 38%.
- Almost 36% of Latinos in Rhode Island are eligible to vote, ranking 32nd nationwide in the share of the Hispanic population that is eligible to vote.

	U.S.	Rhode Island	Rhode Island State Rank
Total population (thousands)	299,398	1,068	43
Percent of the population (all ages) that is Hispanic	14.8	11.2	12
Percent of all eligible voters (citizens ages 18 and older) who are Hispanic	8.7	5.6	13
Percent of the Hispanic population (all ages) that is eligible to vote	40.6	35.8	32

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations from the 2006 American Community Survey (IPUMS 1% sample)

Characteristics of Eligible Voters

- Rhode Island’s Hispanic eligible voters are younger than all eligible voters in Rhode Island—37% of Hispanic eligible voters in Rhode Island are ages 18 to 29 versus 22% of all Rhode Island eligible voters.
- Latino eligible voters in Rhode Island are much more likely to be naturalized citizens than are all Rhode Island eligible voters—34% versus 8%. They are also more likely to be naturalized than are all Latino eligible voters nationwide (26%).
- The proportion of Hispanic eligible voters in Rhode Island who have attended college or earned at least a bachelor’s degree is less than the proportion of all Rhode Island eligible voters who have this level of education—30% of Hispanics versus 55% of all eligible voters in Rhode Island. They also have a lower level of education than all Hispanic eligible voters nationwide, only 41% of whom have attended college or earned a bachelor’s degree or more.
- Latino eligible voters in Rhode Island are less likely to live in an owner-occupied home than all eligible voters in Rhode Island—36% versus 67%.

Table 2
Characteristics of Eligible Voters
in Rhode Island and the United States

	RHODE ISLAND		UNITED STATES	
	Hispanics	All	Hispanics	All
Population (in thousands)				
Total population	120	1,068	44,299	299,398
Eligible voters (citizens ages 18 and older)	43	766	17,975	206,329
Percent of Eligible Voters				
Age				
18-29	36.9	21.7	31.1	21.5
30-44	31.2	26.0	31.6	26.8
45-59	20.3	27.3	22.5	28.0
60 and older	11.6	25.0	14.9	23.8
Gender				
Female	55.3	53.3	50.8	51.8
Male	44.7	46.7	49.2	48.2
Type of citizen				
Citizen by birth	65.7	92.5	73.6	92.7
Naturalized citizen	34.3	7.5	26.4	7.3
English-speaking ability				
Does not speak English "very well"	42.7	5.0	24.3	4.3
Speaks only English or English "very well"	57.3	95.0	75.7	95.7
Educational attainment				
Did not complete high school	33.1	14.2	27.3	14.0
Completed high school	37.1	30.9	31.6	31.2
Some college	18.9	28.3	27.8	29.8
Bachelor's degree or more	10.9	26.6	13.3	25.0
Marital Status				
Married	37.0	48.9	47.8	52.7
Never Married	42.9	30.9	33.5	26.3
Other	20.0	20.3	18.7	20.9
With child(ren) younger than 18 in home				
	40.4	24.2	33.4	26.8
In owner-occupied homes				
	36.0	66.8	60.2	70.8
Household income*				
Less than \$30,000	41.6	21.1	26.1	22.9
\$30,000-\$49,999	20.8	16.9	21.7	19.4
\$50,000-\$74,999	18.5	20.1	21.5	20.7
\$75,000-\$99,999	11.1	15.7	13.5	14.1
\$100,000 or more	7.9	26.2	17.1	22.9

*Persons in households with zero or negative income excluded (less than 1% of all eligible voters in the U.S.)
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations from the 2006 American Community Survey (IPUMS 1% sample)

Characteristics of Eligible Voters in Rhode Island, by Race and Ethnicity

- White eligible voters outnumber Latino eligible voters in Rhode Island by a margin of nearly 16 to 1—668,000 whites compared with 43,000 Latino eligible voters.
- Hispanic eligible voters are younger than white eligible voters in Rhode Island—37% of Hispanic eligible voters are ages 18 to 29 compared with 20% of white eligible voters.
- Latino eligible voters in Rhode Island are more likely to be naturalized citizens (34%) than are white eligible voters (4%).
- Hispanic eligible voters are less likely than white eligible voters in Rhode Island to live in owner-occupied homes—36% versus 70%.

Table 3
Characteristics of Eligible Voters in Rhode Island, by Race and Ethnicity

	Hispanics	NON-HISPANIC White
Population (In thousands)		
Total population	120	847
Eligible voters (citizens ages 18 and older)	43	668
Percent of Eligible Voters		
Age		
18-29	36.9	19.6
30-44	31.2	25.5
45-59	20.3	28.0
60 and older	11.6	26.8
Gender		
Female	55.3	53.1
Male	44.7	46.9
Type of citizen		
Citizen by birth	65.7	95.8
Naturalized citizen	34.3	4.2
English-speaking ability		
Does not speak English "very well"	42.7	2.0
Speaks only English or English "very well"	57.3	98.0
Educational attainment		
Did not complete high school	33.1	12.9
Completed high school	37.1	30.6
Some college	18.9	28.3
Bachelor's degree or more	10.9	28.2
Marital Status		
Married	37.0	50.8
Never Married	42.9	28.6
Other	20.0	20.6
With child(ren) younger than 18 in home	40.4	23.2
In owner-occupied homes	36.0	70.2
Household income*		
Less than \$30,000	41.6	19.2
\$30,000-\$49,999	20.8	16.4
\$50,000-\$74,999	18.5	20.6
\$75,000-\$99,999	11.1	15.9
\$100,000 or more	7.9	27.9

*Persons in households with zero or negative income excluded (less than 1% of all eligible voters in the U.S.)
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations from the 2006 American Community Survey (IPUMS 1% sample)

Endnotes

- ¹ In this fact sheet, eligible voters are defined as U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. Eligible voters are not the same as registered voters. To cast a vote, in all states except North Dakota, an eligible voter must first register to vote.
- ² The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably. References to “whites” are to the non-Hispanic component of that population.
- ³ The specific data set used to derive estimates contained in this fact sheet are from the University of Minnesota’s Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) for the 2006 American Community Survey (1% sample). Information can be found on the following Website: <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. The estimates in this fact sheet are subject to sampling error. Also, estimates in this fact sheet will differ from estimates that may be published by the Census Bureau because of differences between the data used by the Census Bureau and the data it has released for public use. Further information on Census data and on sampling error in the data is available at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2006/AccuracyPUMS.pdf>.